GRADUATE SCHOOL TIMELINE

As early as you think graduate study might be an option for you, begin discussing it with your academic advisor, faculty members, Career and Professional Readiness Center staff and others. The earlier the better. You will need to get a good sense of what graduate study entails, the types of graduate programs and degrees that are available, the kind of coursework you should complete as an undergraduate, and the level of scholastic achievement you will need in order to be considered a viable candidate.

Junior Year – Fall
- Begin thinking about graduate school in a more systematic manner.
- Research programs and schools that interest you. The CPRC website at www.sbu.edu/cprc is an excellent starting point for your research.
- Meet with your academic advisor to begin discussing graduate school options and make sure that you are on track to fulfill all requirements for graduation.
- Talk to seniors in your major who are going through the graduate school application process.
- Consider doing informational interviews with people in the field you’d like to study.

Junior Year – Spring
- Begin researching financial aid options. Scholarship deadlines are often earlier than graduate school application deadlines.
- Look for summer jobs or internships in your field.
- Begin to prepare for the entrance exams (GRE, LSAT, GMAT, MCAT), if applicable.
- Continue researching schools of interest and begin requesting applications and catalogs.
- Meet with faculty members and career counselors to discuss programs and options.
- Create and maintain contacts with potential reference writers (professors, supervisors, etc.).

Summer between Junior and Senior Year
- Work, intern, or volunteer at a job that is related to your field of interest.
- Continue to research graduate programs and faculty members within those programs.
- Try to visit the universities in which you are most interested.
- Develop the tentative list of schools to which you plan to apply, being sure to include both reach and safe schools. Request application materials and review each one in detail.
- Establish contact with faculty members at the universities to which you plan to apply, if appropriate.
- Continue to prepare for the admissions exams.
- Start saving money for the application process, schools may ask anywhere from $20 to $100 in application fees.

Senior Year – September
- Contact the financial aid offices at the schools to which you plan to apply to determine all sources of possible aid.
- Organize applications and related information, with a separate folder for each school.
- Start developing a timeline for each application you will be submitting. Be aware that financial aid deadlines can be quite different from general application deadlines.
- Begin to put together information for the professors who will write your letters of recommendation.
- Register for admission tests.
- Make photocopies of applications and begin to fill them out.
- Begin to brainstorm ideas for your personal statement.

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Senior Year – October/November
- Take standardized tests, if appropriate, and request that your scores be sent to the schools you have chosen.
- Double check timelines for application packages for each school/program.
- Finish your personal statement and other essays required for applications. Have faculty members and others you trust review your document.
- If you are required to submit other writing samples, a portfolio, or an audition tape, be certain that all portions of your applications are well-prepared.
- Request letters of recommendation at least ONE MONTH BEFORE THEY ARE DUE.
- Request official transcripts from the Registrar. Be sure to include transcripts from all institutions where you pursued undergraduate coursework.
- Complete and send applications for schools of interest. Most school deadlines range from mid-November through early February. Sending applications three to four weeks before deadline is recommended.
- Confirm that official transcripts were sent to the schools to which you are applying.

Senior Year – December
- Complete and send application for all schools of interest. Most school deadlines range from mid-November through early February. Sending applications three to four weeks before deadline is recommended.
- Always follow up with schools to confirm that they have received your application and all supporting materials.
- Retake graduate school admissions tests, if necessary.
- Send thank-you notes to reference writers.

Senior Year – January
- Follow-up on the status of your applications.
- Prepare to make a decision about which program you will choose. Identify what factors are most important to you in this decision-making process.
- Develop a contingency plan in the event you don’t get accepted to the schools of your choice.

Senior Year – January-April
- Prepare for on-campus interviews, if required.
- Send thank-you notes to interviewers.
- Let your reference writers, professors, and everyone who has assisted you know where you got in and where you’re going.
- Enjoy the end of your senior year and look forward to a rewarding experience in graduate school!

For additional resources related to the graduate school search and application process, visit the CPRC website at www.sbu.edu/cprc.